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**Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory**

**Security Council**
**Sixty-fourth year**

## Identical letters dated 6 March 2009 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I write to you today in follow-up of previous letters regarding Israel's aggressive, illegal and destructive colonization activities and measures in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in and around Occupied East Jerusalem. International law, including humanitarian and human rights law, continues to be deliberately trampled by the occupying Power, amounting to grave breaches and gross violations of the human rights of the Palestinian civilian population under occupation.

This week, on 3 March, the occupying Power issued another 55 demolition orders against Palestinian homes, this time specifically targeting homes located in the Shu'fat refugee camp area of Occupied East Jerusalem. This was followed yesterday, 5 March, by the occupying Power issuing demolition orders against 36 Palestinian families living in two buildings in the Al-Abbasiyya quarter in the Silwan neighbourhood of Occupied East Jerusalem, declaring that the families had 10 days to evacuate their homes. Preceding these orders, as mentioned in our last letter to you, the occupying Power had issued demolition orders against over 80 Palestinian homes in the Silwan neighbourhood of Occupied East Jerusalem, an area that has been constantly and heavily targeted by Israeli demolition, eviction and excavation orders and measures.

These orders are the latest in a series of such illegal measures comprising a massive Israeli drive to carry out the widest demolition of Palestinian homes in the Occupied Palestinian Territory since 1967. Such orders, which are clearly intended to illegally alter the demographic composition, character and status of Occupied East Jerusalem and surrounding environs as part of Israel's overall settlement campaign in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, threaten to render hundreds more Palestinian families homeless and to further displace Palestinians, in addition to the thousands already displaced by the occupying Power.

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We reject the empty Israeli pretext of a "lack of building permits" as justification for these demolition orders. Israel's discriminatory practices of denying permits to the Palestinian Jerusalemites under its occupation to build or expand their homes and imposing arbitrary and racist residency restrictions on them is well-documented. The intent of the occupying Power is irrefutable — to alter the physical and demographic landscape of Occupied East Jerusalem by forcing its de-Palestinianization by driving out the Palestinian inhabitants of the city by such unlawful means, while at the same time promoting the city's Judaization through other physical colonization measures that create facts on the ground, including the construction and expansion of settlements and the Wall, the transfer of thousands upon thousands of more Israeli settlers and the incessant excavations throughout the city, including in the area of Al-Haram Al-Sharif.

Such illegal actions and intimidation measures by Israel, the occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory must be condemned by the international community and unequivocal calls for their immediate cessation must be made.

Furthermore, these illegal policies and practices constitute a serious blow to any efforts to pursue peace, as they are considered to be a reflection of Israel's absolute lack of commitment to a peaceful settlement based on the two-State solution. Revelations about such demolition orders aimed at the transfer of the Palestinian population of Occupied East Jerusalem, in addition to revelations about ongoing settlement activities, including the latest reports about plans to construct 77,000 new units in various illegal Israeli settlements, seriously undermine Israel's credibility as a partner in any peace process. In this regard, it is imperative to underscore that Israel has intensified its illegal settlement activities in the West Bank, particularly in East Jerusalem, by 17 times in the past year. This has been perpetrated in grave breach of international humanitarian law and in violation of relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 1515 (2004) and 1850 (2008), which endorsed the Roadmap call for immediate cessation of all settlement activity, including the so-called natural growth, and the dismantlement of settlement "outposts".

These unlawful actions are totally contrary to and incompatible with the purpose and stated goals of the peace process. Indeed, these illegal colonization activities indicate only the desire and intention of the occupying Power to continue its land grab and entrench its control of the Palestinian land, rather than the intention to uphold United Nations resolutions and the principle of land for peace, which necessitates the cessation and reversal of its illegal colonization measures towards ultimately ending this illegal, prolonged military occupation as a prerequisite for the achievement of a just, lasting peace.

We cannot stand idly by as more Palestinian land is grabbed, more Palestinian property is destroyed, more Palestinian families are displaced and collectively punished, and the composition, character and status of our future capital is being forcibly changed by the occupying Power's illegal actions. Moreover, the international community has a moral and legal obligation to ensure respect by Israel for international law, including its specific obligations as an occupying Power under the Fourth Geneva Convention, and to hold Israel accountable for its blatant, calculated and deliberate trespasses of the law.

The Palestinian leadership remains committed to the principle of the two-State solution, on the basis of United Nations resolutions and international law, as the

only way to realize true peace in the region. At the same time, however, we stress that Israel, the occupying Power, must be obliged to prove its commitment to international law, including to international humanitarian and human rights law, which are applicable to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, as well as to reaffirm its previous commitments undertaken in the course of the peace process and its adherence to the principle of a two-State solution if it is to be considered a credible peace partner.

Serious and genuine negotiations cannot and will not be conducted while these illegal Israeli actions continue to be carried out. Accordingly, the international community, in upholding its legal obligations and in pursuit of the goal of peace and stability, must also be unequivocal in its message that peace in the Middle East will be the consequence of ending the 42-year-old Israeli occupation, which cannot happen unless Israel stops completely its illegal colonization campaign in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

The present letter is in follow-up to our previous 335 letters to you regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 25 February 2009 (A/ES-10/449-S/2009/113), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice. (As all the victims have not yet been identified, their names will be included in an annex to a future letter.)

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer